

NOTICES

The Dream is Coming True

EUGENE, Ore. – Ten years ago, when Frank Merrill began in earnest to drum up interest in building a longhouse on the Lane Community College campus, it seemed like an impossible dream.

Merrill, who hails from the Karuk Tribe in Northern California, just didn't want to give up, however, because he saw firsthand what the American Indian students needed – a American Indian longhouse on campus. The Native community unanimously supported his idea because a longhouse would give students the kind of support they need to succeed in pursuing their educational goals.

The drums have thundered and voices have been singing these past 10 years, heralding the coming of something that LCC students have strongly desired – an American Indian longhouse on campus. It has taken more than just a strong desire to make it happen; it has taken a concerted effort to start making it possible.

LCC President Mary Spilde put the administration's support behind the effort; the Lane Community Foundation has given leadership and financial support, as have many Oregon tribes. So it seems that the dream is coming true.

Longhouse Logs

The logs that were delivered to Parking Lot A on May 8 are a donation from the Coquille Tribe toward construction of the longhouse.

Lane alumnus and Coquille Tribal member Judy Rocha started her tribe's effort to contribute to the project in 2004. The Coquille Tribe donated \$20,000 in cash and a matching amount in timber.

In January, volunteers and staff involved in the longhouse project joined Coquille Tribal leaders for a ceremony on tribal reservation land in the coast range, where the first two trees were cut.

According to enrollment records, students who self-identify as being of American Indian lineage number around 671 in the current and past years. This gives LCC the distinction of having one of the greatest numbers of American Indian students in community colleges nationwide.

Vice President Donna Koechig points out that one of the reasons probably is because, "We place special emphases on students' individual needs, providing programs that allow students to transfer to four-year institutions or simply explore their interests."

James Florendo Hired

Merrill retired as Native American Student Program coordinator before the longhouse project came close to being a reality. His work as a spokesman for the Lane Longhouse will be memorialized with its completion.

James Florendo was hired to replace Merrill during the 2005 school year. He is one of the few enrolled Oregon tribal



Logs for the Lane Community College Longhouse, donated by the Coquille Tribe (photo by Richard Archambault)

faculty members (Warm Springs) working in Oregon higher education.

Florendo chose to join LCC for a number of reasons, among them that a community college features "teachers who teach, not researchers," and that he can work within "curriculum that makes others aware of Native American culture," which allows him to influence curriculum. In addition, he says, "There is a strong sense of community throughout Lane's entire faculty and staff – which mirrors Native culture."

Native American Advisory Board

LCC has brought together a Native American Advisory Board led by local tribal elders. American Indian students at LCC assist the board in developing the infrastructure of the LCC Longhouse as do administration staff and faculty.

The longhouse as envisioned will be used for traditional American Indian ceremonies as well as for an educational facility. The advisory board will oversee the appropriateness of proposed activities that may be held in it.

While not all longhouses look the same from the outside, they offer the same type of support that individuals, families, and tribal groups look for when they need to do ceremonies, celebrations, or just plain visiting.

As envisioned by the early organizers, a Lane Longhouse would add the dimension of formal college classroom studies. Florendo quips that is "something not generally seen in the longhouses 'at home.'"

New Linguistics Program Begins

Languages of many American Indian tribes are in danger of being lost, perhaps forever. LCC is trying to help save those languages through programs it now offers.

Its commitment to American Indian programs and its partnerships with the nine federally recognized tribes in Oregon have grown during the past decade. It offers nearly 20 courses in

American Indian subjects, ranging from a two-year Chinuk-wawa (pronounced chin-OOK, wah-wah) language course to global ecology from an American Indian perspective, from writing courses that emphasize American Indian issues to literature, ethnic studies, and history courses with American Indian themes.

Five learning communities bring these courses together for students by enriching their educational experience through integrated assignments that broaden student understanding. For instance, the first endowed chair named from an anonymous \$1 million gift was to linguist Jana Underriner, who coordinated a first-year program to teach Chinuk-wawa.

One of the main goals of LCC's American Indian Language Program is to have these languages accepted as fulfilling a language requirement for students who transfer to a four-year university. Another goal is to get our American Indian students interested in learning their own language.

Umista Ready to Begin Third Year

LCC recognized the need to reach out to new students on a yearly basis

and has begun the Umista Native American Program. Umista (pronounced YOU-mis-tah) is part of the Rites of Passage summer academy for American Indian youth in middle and high schools.

In theory Umista is a summer program, but students and counselors meet on a weekly basis throughout the year. Counselors and LCC students immerse American Indian students in proper social interaction through individual and group activities. This program also allows participants the opportunity to observe college culture at LCC.

The college provides broad-based support for students through its Native American Program, a counseling program for Indian and Alaskan Natives, and the Native American Student Association.

LCC Longhouse Groundbreaking Ceremony

Provided that all funding is secured to build this longhouse, these American Indian program offerings and many more may soon become available at the LCC Longhouse.

One feature that this longhouse offers is a Hall of Honor that will have display cases in which various tribes will be invited to display art and appropriate representational cultural objects.

Currently, LCC has raised \$729,000 toward its \$1.4 million goal. It's seeking all avenues of support for the project.

In anticipation of reaching project goals, preparations are being made for a groundbreaking ceremony for the longhouse by mid-summer. The LCC Native American Advisory Board will extend invitations far and wide and LCC encourages all who are interested to participate.

For more information, contact Florendo at 541-463-5308, e-mail at florendoj@lanecc.edu, or by mail at Lane Community College, 4000 E 30th Ave., Eugene, OR 97405.

Oregon Crafted™ Issues Call to Artists

Oregon Crafted™ is part of a non-profit organization that promotes economic development through cultural tourism. We currently are looking for new artists to be included in the second edition of the *Oregon Crafted Guidebook™*, a unique marketing tool providing information and photos about artists and galleries with maps to their studios.

It's designed to bring the customers (visitors) to the artists' studios to meet them, experience the creative environment, and learn about the artistic process. Member studios are open the first weekend of each month and by appointment. Galleries and other points of interest are featured to broaden the experience and help the customer see art in other settings.

The guidebook currently includes artists in Benton, Lane, Linn, and Lincoln counties. Expanding the project to other regions of the state is in the beginning stages and will be announced as funding and staffing are acquired.

Please contact Oregon Crafted at 220 E 11th Ave., Suite 5, Eugene, OR, 97401; 541-687-8353; or patti@oregoncrafted.org to request a comprehensive informational packet. **The application deadline is July 1, 2006.**

Oregon Crafted™, a project of the Oregon Council for Business Education, is a non-profit economic development project aimed at increasing the stability and prosperity of Oregon's artists and handcrafters, particularly those in rural areas, through education and related resources.